

The Process of Learning from the News Media: A Meta-Analysis

Margaret M. Flynn, PhD

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The current study aims to survey the landscape of theoretical and empirical research relating to how individuals learn from the news media. Learning from the news has been a consistent and robust area of focus throughout the many years of media research (Jeffres, Atkin, & Fu, 2011). However, recent upheaval in the mediated news environment has caused questions to arise regarding whether this area is in need of theoretical evolution. Additionally, many of these perspectives have never been subjected meta-analytic review.

It is because of these concerns that this study undertook the task of collecting, recording, and analyzing much of the research pertaining to how individuals consume and learn from the news. Theories of agenda setting, framing, priming, uses and gratifications, selective exposure, and several additional concepts were included in the analysis. Results indicate that classic notions of the impact of interpersonal communication and motivations hold true even amongst more recent work. Additionally, findings demonstrate the greater need for explicit measurement of knowledge amid the framing and priming research traditions. Ultimately, this work offers several prescriptions regarding the measurement of news knowledge and the overall news consumption process.

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Margaret M. Flynn

B.A., Stonehill College, 2008

M.A., University of Connecticut, 2010

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Doctor of Philosophy Dissertation

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Presented By

Margaret M. Flynn, B.A., M.A.

Major Advisor: _____

David Atkin

Associate Advisor: _____

Diana Rios

Associate Advisor: _____

Mark Hamilton

University of Connecticut

2013

Dedication:

I dedicate this work to the memory of my mother Marguerite A. Flynn, and to my father Peter J. Flynn, and the fervent support they have always given me.

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

Rationale

Previous Meta-Analyses and their Prescriptions

Study Aims

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Early Journalism Theory

Two Step Flow Model and News Diffusion

Agenda Setting Theory

Interpersonal Communication

Need for Orientation

Second Level Agenda Setting

Framing and Priming

Framing

Priming

Uses and Gratifications

Uses and Gratifications and News Research

Selective Exposure

Information Processing and Cognitive Mediation

Additional Concepts

Chapter 3: Method

Literature Search

Two Step Flow and Early Research

Agenda Setting

Framing and Priming

Uses and Gratifications

Selective Exposure

Cognitive Mediation and Information Processing

Additional Concepts

General Specifications

Effect Size Calculation

Coding Procedure

Correlation Coding

Study Artifacts and Additional Moderators

Chapter 4: Results

Two Step Flow and News Diffusion

Agenda Setting

Second Level Agenda Setting

Framing and Priming

Uses and Gratifications

Selective Exposure

Cognitive Mediation and Information Processing

Additional Concepts

Chapter 5: Discussion

Limitations

Conclusions

List of Tables and Figures

- Table 1: Components of Need for Orientation
Table 2: Five Item Knowledge Index
Table 3: Conversion of Common Test Statistics for d and r Values
Table 4: News Diffusion and Two Step Flow Studies
Table 5: Agenda Setting Studies
Table 6: Second Level Agenda Setting Studies
Table 7: Uses and Gratifications and Attention/Exposure Studies
Table 8: Selective Exposure Studies
Table 9: Cognitive Mediation Model and Information Processing Studies
Table 10: Additional Concept Studies
- Figure 1: A Process Model of Framing
Figure 2: An Integrated Process Model of Framing
Figure 3: Cognitive Mediation Model
Figure 4: Linear Relationship Between Exposure and Attention Measures
Figure 5: Effect of Source on News Diffusion
Figure 6: Agenda Setting Effect by Source
Figure 7: Agenda Setting Effect by Interpersonal Communication
Figure 8: Exposure and Attention Measures